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PAPERS READ
BEFORE THE
ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
DURING THE SESSION 1867-68.

[FORMING VOL. XXXVIII. OF THE SOCIETY'S JOURNAL.
PUBLISHED MAY 5TH, 1869.]

- I.—*The Portuguese Expeditions to Abyssinia in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries.* By C. R. MARKHAM, Esq., Secretary, Royal Geographical Society.

Read, November 11, 1867.

It has been the occasional practice of the Council to select papers for reading at the evening meetings which cast a glance at the course of geographical discovery in earlier times, in some particular region which happens to be engaging the special attention of the Society and the public. Thus, when the persistent labours of the Russians caused the geography of Central Asia to form a prominent feature in the proceedings of last session, the retrospect of former travels over that interesting region, which was furnished by the learned paper of Colonel Yule, proved a most opportune and acceptable supplement to the communications of modern travellers, and gave rise to leading commentaries of our President in his two last addresses. The expedition into Abyssinia, and the determination of the Government that no opportunity shall be neglected of collecting fresh information in the various branches of science in that country, will naturally draw the attention of the Society to those African highlands during the ensuing session. It has therefore been thought that we might not be unprofitably occupied for about half an hour during our first meeting in glancing over the early labours of Portuguese explorers in the empire of Prester John.

Portugal, during a century and a half, was a hero nation. She took the lead in all great enterprises, her sons made the power of the little kingdom felt on every coast from Brazil to Japan, and her poet worthily sang their famous and immortal

deeds. To Portugal all our knowledge of Abyssinia is due previous to the time of Bruce.

As soon as the aspirations of Prince Henry had been fulfilled by the discovery of the Cape by Bartholomew Dias, in the year 1487, King John II. saw the importance of collecting information in the East with reference to the possibility of turning the rich trade of the Indies into the new channel; and he was also anxious to discover the dominions of the Christian ruler, called Prester John, who had been reported by the Venetian Marco Polo to reign in the far east. Two Portuguese, named Alfonso de Payva and Pedro de Covilham, were selected for this service. After a long journey through the east, Payva died at Cairo; but Covilham, having heard that a Christian ruler reigned in the mountain of Æthiopia, and having gained no tidings of any other Christian king during all his wanderings, naturally concluded that the Æthiopian potentate was he for whom he had so long sought in vain. So, in pursuance of his instructions, and undeterred by the dangers of the journey, he penetrated into Abyssinia, and presented himself at the court of the Negûs, which was then in the southern province of Shoa, in the year 1490. He delivered the King of Portugal's letter to Prester John to the Negûs Alexander; but he was detained by this Prince and his successors, and was never allowed to leave the country. Covilham, as a young man, had distinguished himself both in the war with Spain and in Morocco, and was an officer of capacity and great courage. He married in Abyssinia, obtained influence at Court, and survived for many years; for he was still living when the Portuguese Embassy arrived in 1520. It is matter for regret that there should be no work by a man who must have acquired so intimate a knowledge of the country and people. He may be described as the theoretical discoverer of the Cape of Good Hope, for before the return of Bartholomew Dias from his great discovery, he had sent to King John a letter, stating that ships sailing down the coast of Guinea might be sure of reaching the termination of the Continent by persisting in a southward course, and when they reached the Eastern Ocean they were to enquire for the Island of the Moon (Madagascar).

In 1507 Labna Dengel (*"Virgin's incense"*), or David, ascended the throne of Æthiopia, with the title of *Wanâg Segged* (*"Precious gem"*). He was very young, and his grandmother Helena assumed the regency. Hearing of the great power of the King of Portugal from Covilham, she sent an Armenian, named Matthew, with a letter from the Negûs David to King Manuel, who was well received at Lisbon; and a return Embassy was despatched under Duarte Galvano, a distinguished but aged

diplomatist, who died on the voyage. But the advisability of opening a communication with Abyssinia was not lost sight of by the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa, and the death of Galvano only delayed the despatch of an embassy.

In April, 1520, the Portuguese Viceroy led a fleet into the Red Sea to attack the Turks, taking Matthew, the Armenian, with him. He anchored at Massowa, where he saw the *Bahar-Nâgash*, or Abyssinian Governor of the province, bordering on the sea, and some monks from the convent of Bisan in the adjacent mountains. This intercourse led the Viceroy to decide upon sending an embassy to the Negûs of Abyssinia. The leading members of the mission were Dom Rodriguez de Lima, a haughty, quick-tempered young officer; Father Francisco Alvarez, a priest, whose quaint narrative is the earliest, and not the least interesting account we possess of Abyssinia; and João Bermudez, the Secretary, a bold and intriguing man, who was much mixed up with the subsequent history of the country.

The routes by which former travellers have entered the highlands of Abyssinia from the sea-coast have now become exceedingly interesting with reference to the advance of the expeditionary force. The Portuguese Embassy of 1520 went first to the monastery of Bisan, on the seaward slope of the Taranta Mountains, and crossing that range arrived at the town of Barua or Debaroa (*Dobarwa*), on the eastern bank of the River Mareb, which was then the capital of the province ruled over by the *Bahar-Nâgash*, or Lord of the Sea. The Mareb separated this province from Tigre. Debaroa and Bisan have disappeared from modern maps; but Bruce mentions that the road by Dobarwa was better than the one he took by Dixa. The route of the Portuguese Embassy seems to be nearly the same as that by Kiaquor, which Dr. Beke describes as a gradual and easy road, well watered, and occupying two days and a half.

The Embassy did not reach the Court of the Negûs, which was then encamped on the northern frontier of Shoa, until October, taking very much the same route as that which was travelled over by Krapf in 1842. The Portuguese, after leaving Debaroa, crossed the Mareb to Axum, and went thence through the district of Angot, by Lalibela and the famous rock of Geshen, where the Abyssinian princes were imprisoned, to the court of the Negûs David, in the province of Fatigar. The embassy was detained for six years in Abyssinia, during which time Father Alvarez had an excellent opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the country and of the manners of the people. In 1526, Don Rodriguez da Lima and his suite were dismissed with a letter to the King of Portugal, and was accompanied by a learned Abys-

sinian named Zagaza-Ab. But Bermudez, the secretary and physician, was detained by the Negûs.

The narrative of Father Alvarez forms a folio volume, which was published at Lisbon in 1540, and there is a copy in the British Museum. Ramusio gives an Italian version, and a French one was printed at Antwerp in 1558. The indefatigable Hakluyt obtained an English translation, which is one of the quaintest and most pleasant bits of reading in the 'Pilgrims' of Purchas.

Soon after the departure of the Portuguese embassy a series of formidable invasions commenced from the south. Armies of Mohammedans, inhabiting the country of Adel and Hurrur, kept pouring into Abyssinia, and, although frequently defeated, their incursions did not cease. Between 1528 and 1540 these Moors, led by the famous General Mohammed Gagn, or the left-handed, overran the whole country, until the Negûs David was obliged to seek refuge on the almost inaccessible mountain of Damo, in Tigrè, where he died in 1540. His widow, who was at Damo, assumed the regency, while his son and successor Claudius, then only eighteen, had taken refuge in a fastness of Shoa.

In this deplorable state of affairs David had resolved to seek aid from the Portuguese, and, the better to ensure their support, he embraced the Romish faith. The physician Bermudez, whom he had detained in Abyssinia, was ordained by the Abyssinian patriarch or Abûna Mark, and nominated as his successor; and was sent first to Rome for confirmation from Pope Paul III., where he arrived in 1538; and thence to Lisbon, to request military assistance for his master, the Negûs David, from the King of Portugal.

The Portuguese were invited to interfere actively in the affairs of Abyssinia; and the prospect of thus carving out an empire was assuredly most tempting. Here was a Christian people persecuted and well-nigh overwhelmed by the followers of the false prophet, crying to their co-religionists to save them. Here was the famed kingdom of Prester John waiting for Portuguese occupation; a country rich in minerals and in flocks and herds; a mountain-land within the tropics, possessing a healthful, temperate climate, and holding within its valleys the lakes and enriching affluents of the mighty Nile; a lofty region, which was believed then, as it is known now to be, if in good hands, the key to equatorial Africa. The King of Portugal did not hesitate, and Bermudez was despatched to Goa with orders to the Viceroy to send an expedition to assist the Negûs of Abyssinia.

In 1541 the Portuguese Viceroy, Don Estevan da Gama, entered the Red Sea, and anchored at Massowa, where the small expeditionary force was landed. This is the only time that a European armed force has invaded Abyssinia, and its operations possess a peculiar interest now that another European force is about to land at the same port, after a lapse of 326 years. But there is this difference in the circumstances. The Portuguese came to a friendly country, invited by its king, to assist in driving out an invader. The English are about to invade an enemy's country, to force him to liberate captives who have been treacherously seized and imprisoned. Yet the Abyssinians cannot treat their enemies worse than they treated their friends and deliverers.

The Viceroy gave the command of the expedition to his brother Dom Cristoforo da Gama, a brave and enterprising officer, and a worthy son of the great discoverer of the Cape; but hasty and impetuous, and deficient in coolness and forethought. He was accompanied by the Patriarch Bermudez, and the force consisted of 450 Portuguese musketeers and 6 small field-pieces. The expedition started from Massowa on July 9th, 1541, and, marching into the interior, halted at some brackish wells till the afternoon of the next day on account of the intense heat. They continued their march for six days, suffering much from the want of water and the means of carriage; for they only had a few camels and mules which carried the artillery. At many places, where the ground was rocky, the camels became useless, and the men had to carry the burdens on their own backs. Dom Cristoforo, like a true captain, was the first to take his share of this work, which, although almost intolerable to the men, was thus made to appear lighter. At the end of seven days the party arrived at so steep a mountain that it took them the whole day to reach the summit. Here the Portuguese rested, with the pleasant view of the wide and beautiful Abyssinian plains spread out before them, and refreshed by the breeze and the delicious springs that descended from the mountains. They rested a few days at a church which had been ruined by the Moors, and here they were met by the Abyssinians, who welcomed them as deliverers, and furnished them with assistance and provisions. Da Gama took the same route in ascending from the coast as had been followed by the embassy of Rodriguez da Lima, and reached Debaroa, where he united his forces with those of the Bahar-Nâgash. Here he was joined by the Queen Mother.

Mohammed Gragn, the terrible Moorish general, was in the province of Tigre, prepared to dispute the advance of the Portuguese with 1000 horse, 5000 foot, 50 Turkish musketeers, and

some artillery. Da Gama's army consisted of 450 Portuguese musketeers, and about 12,000 Abyssinians badly armed with spears and shields. On the whole, they were fairly matched; but the dash and energy of Da Gama at first carried all before him. He took the hitherto impregnable mountain-fortress of Amba Zanet by storm, and during April, 1542, defeated Mohammed Gragn in two pitched battles and drove him into another fastness, whence he sent to implore assistance from one of the Turkish pashas on the Arabian coast. Meanwhile Da Gama crossed the great river Takkazyè, and surprised the famous hill-fortress known as the Jew's Amba, which was garrisoned by Moors and is perched in the most inaccessible part of the mountainous district of Semyen.

This brilliant career of victory was short-lived. During the winter Mohammed Gragn received reinforcements from Arabia, and on August 28th, 1543, he offered battle to the allied army. The action commenced with a cannonade which lasted for some hours. Then the Portuguese made repeated gallant charges, but were as often repulsed; and, finally the Moors advanced in force, and the rout of the allies was completed. Badly wounded and cruelly mortified by his defeat, the gallant Da Gama was with difficulty prevailed upon by the Queen Mother and the Patriarch Bermudez to accompany them in their flight. Bermudez himself relates the subsequent events. He says that on reaching a deep river Da Gama positively refused to go any further, and that they were obliged to leave him behind. There is, however, something suspicious in all this; and I am inclined to doubt whether Bermudez, who tells his own story, is quite clean-handed. It is true that Da Gama had captured a beautiful girl on the Mountain of the Jews, to whom he was much attached, and it is possible that he may have stayed behind in the hope of finding her among the fugitives. But, be this how it may, it is certain that the Portuguese general was captured by the Moors, brutally treated by the savage Mohammed Gragn, and beheaded. Thus ended the romantic career of the noble and chivalrous knight Dom Cristoforo da Gama.

Only 300 Portuguese, out of the 450 who had landed at Massowa, escaped from this fatal battle. Dom Alfonso da Caldeira was chosen as their leader, and they retreated, with the Queen and the Patriarch, to the Jew's Mountain in the province of Semyen, where they were joined by the young Negùs Claudius. They proved of the greatest service to the Abyssinian cause. In the following February a great battle was fought between the Abyssinians and Moors on the plains of Dembea, which was decided by the gallant conduct of the Portuguese, and in which Mohammed Gragn himself was shot by a mus-

keteer named Pedro Leon, who thus avenged the death of his beloved commander. In a subsequent battle Claudius, with the help of his Portuguese, defeated and killed the King of Adel, whose wife was given as a reward to Arias Diaz, the Portuguese leader. The Negûs was eventually slain in a battle with the Mohammedans of Adel, led by a chief named Noor, in March, 1559, and his body-guard of 18 Portuguese were killed to a man in their gallant attempt to defend him. Yet the Portuguese were treated with the basest ingratitude. Some of them settled in Tigrè, and others in the province of Godjam. They married natives, and Dr. Beke tells us that to this day their descendants are called Francis at Karneo and in its vicinity.*

The Jesuits who accompanied and followed Bermudez into the country fixed their head-quarters at Fremona, in Tigrè, where they erected a church and a fortified convent. These buildings were on the top of a high hill, in the centre of a large plain, on one side of which stands Adowa. Bruce visited the ruins, and describes them as consisting of stone walls 25 feet high, with towers in the flanks and angles. Here the Jesuit mission was established for many years, undergoing numerous vicissitudes of good and evil fortune, until it was finally expelled. The place was originally called Mai-goga, which Bruce interprets as the "River of Owls." The name Fremona was given to the convent in honour of Frumentius, the apostle of Abyssinia, who was consecrated the first Patriarch or Abûna by St. Athanasius in 330 A.D. The Jesuits at Fremona worked hard at the Geez and Amharic languages, studied the old Ethiopic chronicles of Axum, and collected material for the early history of Abyssinia, some of which, especially the account of the invasion of Yaman by King Caleb, is corroborated by Greek and Mohammedan writers. The Jesuits also made numerous futile attempts to fix the latitude of Fremona with an astrolabe, always being more than 30 miles out in their reckoning.

But, as missionaries, the Portuguese Jesuits in Abyssinia were eminently unsuccessful. The people preferred their own traditional form of Christianity, hated innovation, and insisted upon having a Coptic, not a Romish, Abûna. Indeed, with such a man as Bermudez success was impossible. He was proud, violent, and insolent; burnt women for witchcraft; treated the native priesthood with contempt; and rendered himself odious to all classes. At last, he went so far as to excommunicate the Negus, who ordered him to retire to a distant convent for the remainder of his life, and sent for a new Abûna from Alexandria. Bermudez with difficulty escaped to Fremona, where he was

* 'Journal,' 1844, vol. xiv. p. 26.

concealed for a long time, and eventually sneaked out of the country by way of Debaroa and Massowa. The ex-Patriarch reached Lisbon in safety, after a residence in Abyssinia of upwards of thirty years. His narrative was published at Lisbon in 1565. There is a copy in the British Museum, and an English version is given in the second volume of Purchas's 'Pilgrims.' This work is the best authority for the famous expedition of Cristoforo da Gama, as it is written by an eye-witness of the scenes it describes.

In 1556 Don Nunez da Barreto, accompanied by a learned Spanish priest named Andres de Oviedo, was sent out to succeed Bermudez as Patriarch of Ethiopia. He died at Goa in 1562; but Oviedo reached Massowa, and was for many years chief of the Jesuits at Fremona. But the mission was neglected and oppressed, though not actually expelled, by the successors of Claudius, and Oviedo died at Fremona, in great poverty, in the year 1577. An account of Oviedo's proceedings, and of those of his brother missionaries, is given in Purchas.

At about this time, apparently in 1572, the Turks seized upon Massowa and other ports on the coast, which they have held ever since: so that the Abyssinian title of Bahar-Nagash, or Lord of the Sea, from thenceforth became empty and vain.

In the beginning of the next century Father Francisco Paez arrived at Fremona, who was by far the ablest European that has as yet resided in Abyssinia. He added to great tact and judgment, and an extraordinary power of influencing the minds of all classes of men among whom he was thrown, an amount of ability which enabled him to succeed in nearly everything he undertook, from turning a stone arch to ruling the heart of a king; and a quickness of apprehension, which amounted to genius. This remarkable man was wrecked at Dharfur, and remained a prisoner in Hadramaut and Yaman for seven weary years. But at length he reached Fremona, and in 1604 was presented at the Court of the Negûs, whose name was Socinios or Onag Segged.

The presence of such a man as Paez soon made itself felt. The Jesuit mission rose into high favour, and both the Negus and his brother Sella Christos embraced the Romish faith. This gave rise to a rebellion, headed by the Coptic Abûna Peter, who was killed in a battle fought amongst the mountains of Semyen; when the insurgents were entirely defeated. The rebel cavalry were seized with a panic, could not stop themselves, and 600 men and horses galloped over a precipice, and plunged into a frightful abyss. One of the Portuguese, named Manuel Gonzalez, who had been carried away with the flying crowd, let go his bridle as his horse was falling through the air, caught the branch

of a tree on which he spent the night, and scrambled safely out next morning. The representation of this memorable catastrophe, in the Latin folio edition of Ludolf's '*Ethiopia*,' is one of the most stupendous prints that artist ever engraved.

After the battle the Negus Socinios crossed the pass of Lamalmon, which is so graphically described by Bruce, and was crowned at Axum, by the new Abûna, on March 23rd, 1609. Paez accompanied him, and continued to reside at his court. But the Romish and Ethiopic priests nourished a deadly hatred against each other. The people of course sided with their countrymen, while the Negûs upheld the Portuguese. The Abûna and the Jesuits thundered excommunications against each other, while nobles and people petitioned the Negus against innovations.

While Paez lived, these disputes were kept within bounds. But the most lasting memorials of his genius are to be found in the ruins of churches, palaces, and bridges, erected under his superintendence. His most famous work was the palace on the peninsula of Gorgora, at the north-western corner of the great lake of Dembea. Here he found a good quarry of white stone. He taught the workmen how to cut and lay the stones, using clay instead of mortar; and eventually he completed an edifice for the Negûs, containing a grand hall and a chamber with a staircase in the centre, leading to an upper story whence there was a magnificent view of the lake. He placed a spring-lock on this door, a precaution which on one occasion saved the life of the Negûs, when the Abuna and some nobles had conspired to kill him. Paez also built a church at Gorgora, another very fine one supported by Ionic columns on the plain of Dembea; and he probably rebuilt the famous church of Martola Mariam in Godjam, which is described by Dr. Beke. A bridge near Gondar and another across the Abai are also probably due to Father Paez. It is a proof of the stiffnecked savagery of the Abyssinians that, with all these models under their very noses, they should still worship in churches and live in huts of which a West Coast negro would be ashamed.

Paez is said to have visited the source of the Abai or Blue Nile in 1618; but Bruce maintains that the account of this visit in the MS. of Paez, quoted by Kircher, was a modern interpolation.

It was certainly through the influence of Paez that the Negus was induced to make a public profession of the Romish faith at Foggera, near the eastern shores of the great lake of Dembea, in 1622. The good Father died soon afterwards at Gorgora, after a residence of nineteen years in Abyssinia. He left a narrative of his labours, of which there were many copies in the

Jesuit colleges; but unfortunately it is not yet in an accessible form, and awaits the attention of the Hakluyt Society. Bruce says that it forms two thick octavo volumes, and that he saw three copies in Italy. There is one in the British Museum.

In the very year that Paez died, Father Manuel d'Almeyda arrived at Massowa. His route into the interior was by the high land of Asmara and Debaroa (both which places are marked on the map of Ferret and Galinier, as well as the convent of Bisan) to Fremona; whence he proceeded to the camp of the Negus at Dancaz in Dembea. He afterwards travelled over most parts of Abyssinia, and his annual letters were published at Rome in 1629. Extracts from some of them are given by Tellez, in his 'History of Ethiopia.'

On the death of Paez, the Negûs is said to have applied to the Pope for a new Patriarch, and Father Alfonso Mendez was sent out in 1624, accompanied by several Jesuit priests, among whom was Father Geronimo Lobo. They landed at Belool or Baylur, on the coast inhabited by the Dankâli tribes, and approached the highlands of Abyssinia by a route which has only once been traversed by a European since their time. Mr. Coffin, the companion of Salt and Pierce, landed at Hanfila in 1810, and reached Chelicut by following the old route of Fathers Mendez and Lobo across the salt-desert.

The Jesuits crossed this scorching desert in the month of June, and Lobo describes their sufferings and hardships in most piteous terms; but they eventually reached the convent of Fremona in safety. Lobo was employed to search for the remains of Cristofero da Gama, which were sent to Goa for interment. This Jesuit remained in charge of the mission at Fremona for some years, and was afterwards ordered by his superiors to Damot, and crossed the Abai by jumping from rock to rock, at a point which was afterwards called "the passage of Father Geronimo." Bruce is very angry with poor Lobo, as he also is with Paez, for having described the sources of the Abai or Blue Nile, which he considers as his own exclusive property. From Damot, Lobo was ordered to return to Tigre, and he remained at Fremona until the expulsion of the Jesuits.

There were, at this time, as many as nineteen Jesuits in Abyssinia, with churches and convents, while the Patriarch Alfonso Mendez had unlimited influence over the Negûs. But they were universally detested by the people; as the Negûs grew old their power waned, and, when he died on September 16th, 1633, it sank for ever. His son and successor Facilidas shared the feeling of the people, and resolved to put an end to the intrusion of these foreign priests. Immediately on his accession the Patriarch Mendez was ordered to leave his Court,

and retire to the convent of Fremona. Soon afterwards he and all his Jesuits were handed over to the tender mercies of the Turks, who sent them to the Pasha of Suâkin; and, after a long imprisonment, they were at length ransomed, and allowed to sail for the Portuguese settlements of the coast of India.

The narrative of the Patriarch Mendez was published in French, at Lille, in 1633; but the original is not known to exist. That of Father Lobo is well known. It was published at Coimbra in 1659, translated into French by Le Grand in 1728, and the English version of 1735 was the first literary attempt of Dr. Samuel Johnson.

General histories of the Portuguese connexion with Abyssinia were written by the Jesuit Balthazar Tellez, and by the German Ludolf; while the work of Father Luis Ureta, published at Valencia in 1610, is more scarce and less trustworthy.

The connexion of the Portuguese with Abyssinia, which extended over a period of a century and a half, is as important to the comparative geographer as it is interesting to the student of history. The limits of this paper render it impossible to dwell at any length upon the geographical results of their explorations. I have merely endeavoured to point out the sources of information respecting this earlier period of European intercourse with Abyssinia; and to give a general idea of the routes taken and the ground covered by the Portuguese explorers. In ascending to the highlands from the shores of the Red Sea, they all, with a single exception, appear to have landed at Massowa, and reached their head-quarters near Axum, by way of the convent of Bisan, Asmara, and Debaroa. But Mendez and Lobo struck out a new route for themselves. Landing at Beilul, far to the south, they marched through the Dankâli country and the desert of salt, and reached Fremona by way of Senafé. Mr. Coffin alone, among modern travellers, has followed the enterprising fathers in this route. The old road of the Greek settlers, from Adulis to Axum, which is said to be the best of all, and the modern route of Halai and Dixá, appear to have been altogether neglected in the period of Portuguese intercourse with Abyssinia.

After reaching the highlands, the different Portuguese explorers, at one time or another, traversed the country in all directions. Alvarez, with the mission of Rodriguez da Lima, went south from Axum by the route afterwards taken by Dr. Krapf, and which would lead direct to Magdala. Da Gama and Bermudez, with their armed force, marched over Tigrè and Samen in every direction; while Paez and Almeida, Mendez and Lobo, became well acquainted with all the districts round the Dembea Lake, and with the provinces of Godjam and Damot.

Before the Jesuits were expelled from Abyssinia, the glory of Portugal had come to an end. But this Abyssinian episode is not the least interesting portion of that brilliant history of Portuguese heroism which has been sung by Camoens. "At the proudest moment of that brief and glorious period," says Schlegel, "a great national song broke forth like the dying notes of the fabled swan, a dirge for the departed hero-nation."

From the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1633 to the arrival of Bruce in 1770, Abyssinia was, with the single exception of the physician Poncet's visit in 1699, closed and unknown to Europeans. The labours of more recent explorers, since Bruce's time, have been admirably sketched up to 1842, by our President, Sir Roderick I. Murchison, in his Anniversary Address of 1844. Numerous travellers have crossed the country since then; missionaries, sportsmen, and consuls, and now there is every probability that this most interesting region will, at least for a time, be more completely opened up than has ever been the case since the time of the Portuguese.

II.—*Geographical Results of the Abyssinian Expedition.* By
C. R. MARKHAM, Esq., Secretary, Royal Geographical
Society.

(Read, February 24, 1868, and June 8, 1868.)

I.—COAST PLAIN ROUND MULKUTTO.

Senafè, December 31st, 1867.

THE proceedings of the reconnoitring party under Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Merewether, Colonel Phayre (Quartermaster-General), and Colonel Wilkins, R.E., have extended over the months of October, November, and December, and the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief may be considered to have brought their preliminary labours to an end. This then is an opportune time for taking stock of the geographical results of the first three months of the Abyssinian expedition.

The reconnoitring party have explored the sea-coast from Mulkutto to Hawâkil Bay, examined and surveyed two passes up the mountains to the Abyssinian table-land—indeed, they may be said to have discovered that leading to Senafè—and reconnoitred about 50 miles of the table-land itself. My own work has hitherto been confined to the plain round Mulkutto, the pass up to the Abyssinian plateau, and the neighbourhood of Senafè.

The point of disembarkation in Annesley Bay is a few yards south of the place where the dry bed of the Hadas reaches the sea; and it is the nearest point on the coast to the foot of the